

NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART

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COMPREHENSIVE EXHIBITION OF CLAUDE LORRAIN (1600-1682) MARKS TERCENTENARY OF ARTIST'S DEATH

WASHINGTON, D.C. August 23, 1982. The most comprehensive exhibition ever held of the work of Claude Lorrain (1600-1682), one of the most admired landscape painters in the history of Western art, opens at the National Gallery of Art on October 17, 1982, and remains on view until January 2, 1983.

Commemorating the 300th anniversary of the artist's death, the exhibition has been organized, on the initiation of the National Gallery, with the Réunion des musées nationaux in Paris. It will be shown in Paris at the Grand Palais from February 16 to May 16, 1983. This is the first major exhibition of Claude's work to be held in the United States or France.

Born Claude Gellée in 1600, the artist is known by the name of his native duchy of Lorraine. He left France at the age of thirteen and worked in Rome for the remainder of his life. There he achieved widespread fame as a landscape painter; Pope Urban VIII, King Philip IV of Spain, cardinals, ambassadors, and Italian and French aristocrats were among his numerous patrons.

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Claude's influence since on the development of landscape painting, and even on landscape architecture, has been immense. He broke decisively with his predecessors in the genre by rendering the effects of natural light on landscape, and both his paintings and drawings celebrate the world in its ideal and harmonious state, purged of imperfections.

Claude's vision of nature was also widely admired by writers and poets. Horace Walpole, the 18th century English novelist and connoisseur, for example, termed Claude "the Raphael of landscape paintings," while the German writer Goethe called him "the greatest painter of landscapes."

This exhibition is arranged in three sections containing, respectively, fifty-three oil paintings, seventy-six drawings, and sixty-eight impressions of the artist's prints. Multiple impressions of many of the etchings will be on view, including a number of rare or unique examples never before exhibited. This comprehensive selection from all categories of Claude's work has been drawn together to reveal the range and variety of his art as well as its contribution to the development of Western landscape painting.

The exhibition further offers an opportunity to view all of his etchings together for the first time; to study Claude's still problematical early paintings; and to reconsider the relationship between Claude and his well-known compatriot and contemporary, Nicolas Poussin, among other issues.

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H. Diane Russell, curator in the Department of Graphic Arts at the National Gallery of Art, has organized the exhibition. Coordinator for Paris is Pierre Rosenberg, curator in the Department of Paintings of the Louvre.

A fully illustrated scholarly catalogue written by H. Diane Russell accompanies the exhibition. This includes general essays on Claude's art as well as detailed commentaries on each individual work. In addition, a separate section provides information on Claude's patrons. A chronology of Claude's life, a selection of commentaries on his art, and a technical discussion of watermarks found on his prints and drawings complete the catalogue. The hard-cover edition of the volume will be distributed in the United States by George Braziller, Inc. A French edition will be published by the Réunion des musées nationaux.

A two-day symposium in conjunction with the exhibition is planned for December 1982, with leading specialists from the United States and Europe presenting papers on various aspects of Claude's art. The symposium will be held at the National Gallery's Center for Advanced Study in the Visual Arts.

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FOR FURTHER INFORMATION or photographs contact Katherine Warwick, Assistant to the Director (Information Officer), or Marla Price, Information Office, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. 20565, (202) 842-6353.